
Femininity Can't Be Bought, Femininity Tips for Transsexuals

I kind of knew it all along. But I never found the right words to say it in a such simple way. It finally dawned on me, after attending Denaë Doyle's seminar on "Expressing the Woman Within with Dance". We can spend as much money as we want on surgeries, hair, cosmetics, clothes and accessories, but all that cannot take us all the way to true femininity. These things might make us look and feel feminine, but they are not the whole story as the world sees it.

Because femininity is a lot more than the 'facade'. It includes who we are and how we express ourselves in everyday situations. It includes how we carry ourselves, how we move, how we communicate, and how we relate to others. Nothing in the world can 'buy' this for us. We've got to work on it by ourselves, or (better) with the help of a good instructor. Sure, this costs money, too! But not nearly as much as we typically spend on surgeries or hair removal. The downside: we have to do the hardest part of the work - no matter how good or expensive our 'femininity coach' might be.

Feminine Movement and voice are neglected too easily in the transition process. We take our pictures, and see a woman. What else do we want?

Well, real life is a little more complicated, Because the photo camera is exchanged for real people's eyes and ears, along with their perception of what a woman is or should be.

Here is where the difference between being tolerated and being accepted comes to play. Sure, in the San Francisco Bay Area you will find more tolerance than anywhere else - and that's greatly appreciated. If that's the only thing important to you, you don't have much to worry about. But if you are like me, if you like the freedom to travel safely outside of the Bay Area, if you don't want your gender status to be recognized immediately, then buckle up for a rough ride towards the land of true femininity.

I often hear excuses, like "I am too tall to pass", "I have too big of a frame size", "I don't have a butt", or "My hands are too large". Think twice: Genetic females come in all shapes and sizes, and nobody questions their femininity. I have seen countless women with those attributes, but usually they knew how to play them down. It's something you can learn, too! But it takes some effort. To get started, consider shifting your reading from Glamour magazine to books like "Flatter Your Figure" by Jan Larkey. Then ask a fashion or feminine image consultant for help. The book will help you understand her recommendations.

Now you can focus on the 'tough stuff' - moving and speaking like a woman. This is hard work, and it is somewhat difficult to evaluate yourself. Unless you really have a fine eye and ear for detail, you will need some kind of femininity or voice coach sooner or later. You can get your feet wet with books like "Creating a Feminine Carriage" by Elaine Sagant, or the videos like "Develop a Female Voice" by Melanie Ann Phillips (also available as CD or tape).

Learning to speak like a woman is a lot like learning a foreign language (I learned two - English and French - and it helped!). You will need to practice with somebody who is qualified, honest and unbiased. That's where the consultants come in. They can teach you more systematically and efficiently, and have the experience to monitor your progress in detail. If you are tight on money, consider a combination of consulting and self-learning. Either way, you will have to practice. A lot...

And while we are talking about practicing: Learn to smile - even in difficult situations. It breaks the ice and opens the door to earn the sympathy and trust of others. It can be the magic bullet to get you out of an embarrassing situation. Haven't we all been there?

It's never too late to learn. However, you might have an easier transition, if you develop much of your femininity before you start living full time. This also gives you a more realistic outlook on what to expect in that new role. I have done it that way, and was overwhelmed with the acceptance and support I experienced, once I announced the change. I had gone through great lengths before I finally made the change - including two trips to Europe, to test the waters in my native culture. So far these efforts have paid off. I wish everyone a similar experience!

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